

QUEST



Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of St. Augustine Newsletter
St. Augustine Beach, Florida

October 2020
2487 A1A South, St. Augustine, FL 32080
3/4 mile south of State Road 312
uufsacontact@gmail.com <http://www.uufsa.org/>

**All in - person activities are on hold until further notice
to avoid spreading COVID-19.**

Sunday services are being presented online through Zoom video conferencing.

Audio transcripts of most past presentations are available on our website.

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Materials for the November issue are due by October 16.

Don Brandes, Editor: donaldbrandes@gmail.com

Thanks to Adele DeSavio for proofreading.

From Your President



As protests continue against the dismaying police killings of Black people in our country, I have a few reflections to share. What do we take away from all these protests and counter protests? How do we react to the senseless taking of human life? It is one good reason we are together.

As the only Peace Corps volunteer in Masan, South Korea (1974-76), I rarely saw another foreigner on the streets. Walking in town, it was common to hear students calling out “hello, hello,” giggling and pointing in my direction. At other times they cried, “big nose, big nose.” I had never seen myself as one who stuck out from a crowd, a quickly identifiable NOT US, but a THEM. Someone who didn’t belong! It’s a strange feeling to know you’re so visible and stand out from everyone else. That taught me something about how we see other people.

But, I learned even more a few years later. It was a Friday afternoon in 1979, when riding the transit bus from the Detroit Blue Cross & Blue Shield office tower, that I somehow lost my wallet enroute to the train station. As I headed home to Ann Arbor, it sunk in that my wallet and its \$600 – my just-cashed paycheck, were gone. A few days later I called the lost and found at Detroit Metro. The man exclaimed, “Yes, we have your wallet.” I jumped in the car and sped the 30 miles to downtown Detroit. Entering the huge bus complex, I drove around to the spacious lounge, where off-duty workers were playing pool or just relaxing. They were all Black and I wasn’t. Just like in Masan, I felt conspicuous. I approached the counter with my business, and the man stepped back and opened a huge safe. He returned with a sealed manila envelope, informing me it was untouched since the driver turned it in. I expected to find a wallet minus the cash. But, incredibly, the cash was all there. Amazed, I peeled off a fifty and asked that it -- along with my thanks - be passed along to that honest driver. That taught me something about my upbringing and all the racial stereotypes I learned, and it taught me something else, that I needed to think differently about people, especially Black people.

Now and then, these experiences come to mind and I’m aware of how broadly and deeply we’re affected by the culture and environment in which we grew up. In Stanford professor Robert Sapolsky’s recent book, *Behavior*, we learn that the human brain reacts differently to photos of people of same vs other racial features, and by gender as well. The reaction can be measured in 50 milliseconds. Different parts of the brain are stimulated when it’s someone who looks like me or doesn’t. I won’t go on here, but, Sapolsky delves into research which shows that despite the hard wiring we share with primates, we humans can learn to manage these responses via the prefrontal cortex and act differently. Clearly, we inherit brains which show less fear and apprehension with “USes” and more with “THEMs.” But, through socialization and conscious effort, we can override the hard wiring and do the right thing. I conclude by noting that a *Washington Post* report found that 93% of protests have been peaceful. Why do we only seem to hear about the ones that aren’t? Media and our own conditioning may be telling us it’s all the THEMs’ fault; but, we should look carefully into what role we “USes” are taking in this matter. And do the right thing.

Finally, please see the announcement of my new weekly “drop in” hours. I hope to see you soon.

Chris McDermott
571-265-4189
surfbiker55@yahoo.com

All Sunday services will be presented online through Zoom video conferencing until further notice. The meeting ID will be posted on the UUFSA website, www.uufsa.org, and will be emailed to everyone on the UUFSA members and friends lists several days before each service. If you are not on either of those lists and would like to be, please contact Don Brandes at donaldbrandes@gmail.com. The starting time for services has changed to 9:30 a.m. instead of the traditional 10:30 a.m. to avoid overloaded Zoom servers during the peak church hour.

Sunday, October 4, 9:30 a.m.

“Sparking Interest in Activism and Reform”

Ed Slavin

Service Leader: Michael Read
Music: Taffy Rook
Story for All Ages



As Civil War Major General Carl Christian Schurz said: "My country, right or wrong, but if wrong, to be put right." Watchdog Ed Slavin shares insights into how "We, the People" win public interest battles. Sparking citizens to organize and win public interest victories takes research, insight, enthusiasm and timing. What's next? Never give up. Speak truth to power. Ask questions. Demand answers. Expect democracy. It is up to us.

Ed has been dubbed an "environmental hero" by local *Folio Weekly*. Born in New Jersey, the only child of volunteer union organizers, he moved to St. John's County in 1999. As an undergraduate, he worked for three U.S. Senators and investigated strip mining and the Tennessee Valley Authority with a Fund for Investigative Journalism grant.

He earned a B.S. in Foreign Service from Georgetown University, and later received his J.D., at the University of Memphis. As Founding Editor of the *Appalachian Observer* in Clinton, Tenn., he was recommended for the Pulitzer Prize after the newspaper won Department of Energy declassification of the largest mercury pollution event in world history. He reported on corrupt Sheriff Dennis Trotter, who was later arrested by the FBI, pled guilty, went to federal prison, and later had to settle an anti-SLAPP suit for having sued Ed for libel. He is a former Legal Counsel for the Constitutional Rights of Government Accountability Project, representing diverse environmental and nuclear whistleblowers and employment discrimination victims.

Here at home, Ed has helped win some 70 public interest victories since 2005, when Rainbow flags were ordered to fly on our historic Bridge of Lions in honor of Gay Pride, vindicating LGBTQ First Amendment rights in St. Augustine. He has published dozens of letters and columns, is an avid blogger (nearly 4 million hits); and is a frequent speaker at local community meetings.

Sunday, October 11, 9:30 a.m.

“The Power of LGBTQ Representation and the Growing Political Shift toward Local Government”

Rosemary Ketchum

Service Leader: Robin Mahonen
Music: Alex Richman
This I Believe

We will dive into the world of local politics and LGBTQ representation in government at all levels. We will also be discussing common barriers to obtaining leadership positions for persons with an intersectional identity.

Rosemary Ketchum is a member of the City Council of Wheeling, West Virginia, representing Ward 3. She is also Associate Director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness Greater Wheeling Drop-in Center and on the boards of several organizations, including the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. She has served as a guest on MSNBC and the TODAY show and has been profiled by several publications including Time Magazine. She has been featured on CBS, and CNN for her work in community organizing and politics.



Donating on the UUFSA Website

You can make your weekly plate donation online now on the UUFSA website. Scroll down the home page and you will see a button labeled “Donate.”



Click on the button and you will go to a page where you can choose to give to the UUFSA or one of the local charities we support. Once you select a recipient, the screen will change and let you decide how much to give. There are set amounts and also a button that says “\$0.00.” If you click on the “\$0.00” box you will then have the option to write in any amount you choose. You can pay with Apple Pay, Google Pay, or by credit card on the next screen.

You also can still donate by check. Please make all checks payable to UUFSA. If you wish your check to be applied to your pledge, write "Pledge" in the memo line. If you intend the check as a miscellaneous donation, write "Plate." If you wish to make a contribution to one of the charities we support, write the name of that charity on the memo line. Mail checks to:

UUFSA
2487 A1A South
St. Augustine, FL 32080

Sunday, October 18, 9:30 a.m.

“How Do You Know”

Donald Brandes, Ph.D.

Service Leader: Jerome Fosaaen
Music: Alex Richman
Third Sunday Plate Collection: Food Pantry



This is the first of a two-part series that examines how we determine what we believe and what we really can know.

Each week when we recite our Spoken Covenant, we assert that “the quest for truth is the sacrament of this congregation.” Other churches will tell you how it is. This church says you have to go find out for yourself. Therefore, the search for truth becomes quite important to us. As seekers of the truth, we must have some means of knowing the truth when we find it or our search becomes meaningless. How will you know the truth when you find it? Are you just going to “know?”

Don Brandes has a Ph.D. in physical geography, with a specialization in climatology and natural resource management from the University of Florida. He became interested in epistemology while undergoing training in how to do scientific research.

Don taught climatology, geomorphology, and regional natural resource management at Texas State University and the University of Alabama before returning home to Florida and finishing his working career in water resource management with the St. Johns River Water Management District, where he served at various times as Water Conservation Program Manager, Assistant Director of Water Supply Planning, and Assistant Director of Water Use Permitting.

Chris McDermott Office Hours

I'm going to be holding “office hours” every **Thursday afternoon from 3:30 – 5:30 at the UUFSA** until further notice, starting on Sept. 24. Come by to chat, share news or meditate. We'll be social distancing and/or masking, and we will probably hang outside, weather permitting. I'd like to just keep it open and if those present want to meditate – we'll sit down for that, or we can pull weeds with Mary or just chat. Please bring a chair (for outside), your drink (no throw-aways please) and your mask. When you come by, you might want to bring your monthly donation; you can drop it in the mailbox out front. **A two-for!** In the time of the COVID we are unable to safely gather all at once, but I believe we can safely meet in small groups for a limited time period. Thursday afternoon. We'll try this day and time and adjust if it's not suitable. See you there!

Chris

Sunday, October 25, 9:30 a.m.

“The Paradox of Thomas Jefferson”

Danna Kelley

Service Leader: Maureen Herth
Music: Taffy Rook



Thomas Jefferson professed to love liberty and hate tyranny, and yet over the course of his life he held more than 600 people in bondage. When he wrote the Declaration of Independence in 1776, 20 percent of the people living in the colonies were enslaved. What did Thomas Jefferson say about the institution of slavery? Did he wrestle with his conscience? What did he and other founding fathers think the solution would be?

Join Monticello guide Danna Kelley to discuss these questions, the influence of the Enlightenment, and the legacies of race-based slavery today. She will also give an overview of the lives of the enslaved people who lived at Jefferson's plantations and address how the interpretation at Monticello has evolved over the years.

Danna Kelley, a self-avowed history “nerd” since childhood, is a guide and house operations

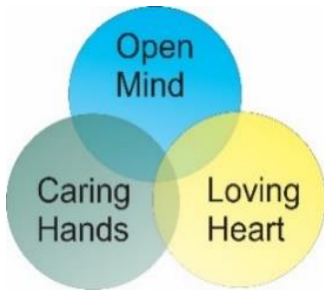
supervisor at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello in Charlottesville, Virginia. After a career in New York City in the public relations and tourism industries, Danna moved with her family to Charlottesville where she landed her dream job at Monticello 15 years ago. She's also had the pleasure all her life of being the older, yet not necessarily wiser, sister of UU parishioner Maureen Herth with the added bonus of gaining Jim Herth as a brother-in-law.

Peace Pole

Have you seen the actual Peace Pole yet? When you do, search for the painting of the mistletoe. (Clue...it has a bow.) Mistletoe is an evergreen parasite that has yellowish flowers and white berries. Various meanings come from Nordic myths relating to fire, light and re-birth. References to this plant date back to the Druids, 79 BC – 24 BC. Celtic tradition accounts for the tradition of Christmas Kisses under the mistletoe as a foretelling of a "Fruitful Union." The berries were believed to have healing properties.

Annette Jones

Programs for Children and Youth



UUFSA's *Harry and UU Hogwarts School of Social Action* is up and running on Zoom. The first social action undertaken by our **Enchanting Activists** was to fight the *Horcrux* (curse) of illiteracy. To do this they launched a very successful book drive to benefit the Early Learning Coalition of North Florida. With the support of UUFSA members and friends, our young activists collected four boxes of books and raised over \$500! Our **Enchanting Activists** hope members enjoyed receiving their bookmarks, and they are very grateful for your very generous support of their efforts.

Thank you for your generous support of our book drive to benefit the **Early Learning Coalition of North Florida** and for helping us fight the *Horcrux of Illiteracy*



The next *Horcrux* our young activists will take on is hunger. They will be asking for non-perishable food and cash donations in support of the St. Johns County Ecumenial Food Pantry. The Food Pantry is also the focus of the UUFSA's "Share the Plate" donations for the month of October. To begin this effort, Cherie Dolgin and Chris Fosaaen visited the **UU Hogwarts School of Social Action** to explain what happens at the food pantry and the importance of this community effort, particularly in these very difficult times. Thank you Cherie and Chris!! You will hear more about this from our **Enchanting Activists** making magic potions in their respective potion laboratories.

To learn more about or to join our program, please contact *Professor Kelly Sommer* (Kelly.winten@gmail.com) or Co-Headmasters of the *UU Hogwarts School of Social Action* Jindy Gelow (jjindyms@yahoo.com) or Barbara Battelle (Battellebarbara@gmail.com)

Adult Learning

UUFSA Adult Learning: 2020-21

Tuesdays, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Part 1. Science and Religion

Coordinator: Richard Lahey

Tentative Schedule

October 6	Geology, Cosmology and Biblical Chronology	Barbara Battelle
October 20	Darwin and Responses to Evolution	Surindar Paracer
November 10	Fundamentalism and Creationism	Louis Post
November 24	De Beauvoir, Hypatia, Hildegard and Wollsentcrat	Renee Jones
December 8	Why Evil Exists	Chris McDermott

Zoom login information

Through Oct 20, 2020:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82859597177>
 Meeting ID: 828 5959 7177
 Password: 495321

Nov 10, 2020 through Dec 8, 2020:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82211021377>
 Meeting ID: 822 1102 1377
 Password: 180319

Part 2. Science and Religious Experience: The Spiritual Brain

Neurotheology: A New Perspective on Ancient Questions

Coordinator: Surindar Paracer

January 5	Why Do We Have a Spiritual Brain?
January 19	Brain Function and Religion
February 2	Believers and Atheists
February 16	Spiritual Development
March 2	The Myth-Making Brain
March 16	The Brain and Religious Rituals
March 30	The Biology of Spiritual Practices
April 13	Religion and Health
April 27	Religion and Brain Dysfunction
May 11	Transmitters to God
May 25	Near-death Experiences and the Brain
June 8	The Believing Brain
June 22	The Brain's Influence in Religious Ideas
July 6	How the Brain Changes God
July 20	How God Changes the Brain
August 3	Why God Won't Go Away
August 17	The Mystical Mind
August 31	Reality and Beyond

Green Sanctuary Team Outings

On the water:

Litter Gitter Rides again. The first 6 lucky persons to sign up (nana@nrdp.net) can look forward to a ride on the Matanzas River with Captain Adam Morley, Saturday, Oct 3, 9 a.m. The Litter Gitter rides offer a splendid opportunity to cruise on the Matanzas with a very knowledgeable guide, to get on the banks and collect some plastic/refuse, and to contribute to keeping it clean and beautiful. If your mobility is limited, you are welcome to remain on board. Donations for the Matanzas River Keeper will be appreciated and collected on site.

On Land:

A nature walk on the Ancient Dunes Trail in Anastasia State Park will be led by Master Naturalist Nana Royer for the first 8 people to sign up (nana@nrdp.net). This trail is rough in places, with small hills and valleys. We will take our time, allowing about 45 minutes or so for the 0.7-mile walk. Suitable for those with moderate fitness levels, older children welcome. Come and learn about the gifts of the forest in this maritime hammock. There is an \$8 fee per car to enter the park. A few people could park outside the park entrance and share one or more vehicles to enter. If you have a state park pass, you can also enter (on foot or bike) via the gate on Old Beach Road. How about Friday, Oct. 9, 10:00 – 11:00 in the morning? We will ask for a donation to help fund Friends of Fish Island to keep the island free of a car wash!



Dining With Dignity

Our next opportunity to provide a nourishing meal for the homeless will be **Sunday, October 4, 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.** Food listed on the monthly emailed menu must be dropped off at UUFSA between 3:30 and 4:00 p.m. so everything can be assembled for distribution at 6:00 p.m. downtown. This is the new routine during COVID-19. For more information, contact **Mary Kellough**, Lkellough@comcast.net, 904-217-9837.



St. Johns Food Pantry (AKA St. Johns Ecumenical Ministries Inc.)



The St. Johns Food Pantry continues to provide emergency food distribution during the pandemic. In August, adults and children came to the pantry, via car, bike or on foot. In all, 1570 bags of food were given to 620 households. The pantry is open Monday – Friday, from 1 – 4pm. Our UU team works two Thursdays a month and most recently gave out 80 food bags in one afternoon. However, the greatest number of food bags given out in one afternoon, in August, was 162 bags! As you can see, there is a strong need in St. Johns County for assistance with hunger. This is why we are so pleased that our UUFSA Kids Program is now focusing on the Food Pantry, as they continue to work on social action programs. Co-Coordinator Chris Fosaaen and Cherie Dolgin recently spoke to the children, via Zoom, to tell them about the pantry and its operation. The class is now working on a food drive for the pantry, which will be extremely helpful. Please watch for details about how you can get involved! Thanks very much.

Co-chair: Chris Fosaaen, phone: 904-673-5630; email: cfosaaen@gmail.com
Co-chair: Cherie Dolgin, phone: 904-461-1604; email: cdolgin@bellsouth.net

Great Decisions October 19, 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. “US relations with The Philippines” Ed Cocoran

For more information, please contact Yosi at jomcintire@bellsouth.net or 904-808-2717.

Farewell Taffy

Taffy Rook, who has been playing piano for us for sixteen years, is moving to North Carolina. Her last day of providing music for the Fellowship will be October 18. We will miss her.

Care Connection



Our Care Connection remains dedicated to providing support and assistance to members and friends during this challenging time. In recognition that we won't be able to physically come together for a while, the Care Connection encourages you to reach out safely. Let's check in on each other. If you are concerned about someone's well-being, give them a call, or inform a member of our team. And don't be afraid to ask for help if you need it. Contact one of our members listed below if you are in need of a

helping hand or would like to be involved with the Care Connection Team. And remember, we are all connected through our shared commitment to our faith and to each other.

Claudia Atkins, Chair 386-717-6765
Adele DelSavio 315-529-6287
Pat Hall 914-787-9184
Maureen Herth 904-463-1032

Cynthia McAuliffe 904-864-1303
Rosemary Wheeler 352-339-4157
Anne Wilke 904-797-1944

October Calendar



- 4 – Food drop-off for Dining with Dignity 3:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 4 – Dining with Dignity 6:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 5 – Program Team 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
- 6 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 8 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.
- 9 – Green Team Dunes Walk 10:00 – 11:00 a.m.
- 12 – Board of Trustees meeting, online 6:00 – 8:30 p.m.
- 16 – Deadline for November Quest contributions 5:00 p.m.
- 18 – Third Sunday Plate Collection: Food Pantry
- 19 – Great Decisions online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 20 – Adult Learning, online 6:00 – 8:00 p.m.
- 22 – Food Pantry 12:30 – 4:00 p.m.